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The Lost

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Lora Nadad is a Padawan at the Almas Academy. She came to the Jedi way relatively late in life -- she is 19 years old, and she's still working to integrate the lessons from her early life, which were often harsh, with the teachings of the Academy. Heroes may have interacted with Lora in the Living Force events "An Official Engagement" or "Coruscanti Dawn."

Lora lived for a long time as a watcher of "the Lost," the name given the children of Cularin who, for one reason or another, have slipped out of society's field of vision. The Lost are young people who live in the abandoned warehouses and other hovels throughout Cularin, some on the main planet, some in the floating cities of Genarius, and some in the lesser-trafficked districts of Forard, scant kilometers from the Jedi academy. As a watcher, Lora looked out for those children, along with a number of other young adults. All of the watchers rose from the ranks of the Lost themselves, and they have a vested interest in doing everything in their power to protect the displaced children of the Cularin system.

As a Padawan, Lora has begun to make headway in raising public recognition of the Lost, and she's trying to establish a fund to assist them in obtaining medical supplies -- the most pressing need this little-known subclass generally has.

One aspect of a recent lesson on the responsible use of the Force involved asking the Padawans to demonstrate how to affect the minds of others without actually calling on the Force. Lora's report, presented in holographic form, made its way into public circulation and has raised a number of eyebrows.

[A figure flickers into being. She is a young woman, dark hair pulled back into a tight braid. She wears the robes of a Padawan and a lightsaber hangs at her belt. Three small gems form a triangle on the lobe of her left ear, and a series of tiny hoop earrings runs from the top of her right ear down to her lobe. She has her hands clasped before her, and her knuckles are beginning to turn white. After several seconds, she begins to speak.]

Hi. I'm Lora, and I'm a Padawan at the Almas Academy. I'm from Cularin, and I can't remember my parents. I grew up on the streets of Forard, scavenging scraps and doing whatever it took to stay alive. If it weren't for the kindness of two strangers who became my friends, Arin and Pthillip, I might still be on the street. I'm here, though. They brought me here, and now I'm a Padawan. And I want to tell you about the children of Cularin who have

no homes. They - - well, we, since I was one of them - - call themselves the Lost.

There are lots of the Lost in Cularin. I mean, for a system as small as ours, we have a lot of traffic. I know that some of my friends who watch over the children still talk about what it was like when the Hutt was in charge. Whatever gets said now, he was definitely running slaves through Cularin. When there were children who were too weak or sick to be good sales, he'd have his lackeys dump them. Or he might steal their parents to sell, and leave the children to take care of themselves.

Not all of the children are that kind of tragic thing, though. Some of them just ran away from home. The thing with the Lost is, we all ended up together, and it didn't matter why. It only mattered that we were together. We always thought we could make it just fine.

It's hard, though. See, food isn't cheap, but at least there are places where you can get it. The Lost do grow up. I mean, look at me. I'm growing up, I guess. And the people who were part of the Lost, when they get older and can do something, sometimes they do.

What makes it hard is that once you've lived alone for a while, you get proud, and you don't want people giving you handouts. Even children can get like that. The people who grew up and got jobs and everything, they remember what it was like. So they don't do handouts, but they do make it so that you can go and do something, some work or whatever, and get food. There's not enough of that to go around, so there are gangs of kids that go out and scour the garbage for stuff that gets thrown away that's still perfectly good, and there are some who steal.

A lot of the kids who are lost have problems with the whole "right versus wrong" thing. See, they're kids, and they don't have things, and they don't understand why. It's like, people need to eat, right? And they need a place to sleep, and warm blankets. They need other people.

But lost children are just invisible. It's hard enough to get adults to really see you, when you're a kid. But a dirty kid, in raggedy clothes, who looks like she needs a handout? Forget it. So these kids may walk around all day, trying to find something to do, and nobody even looks at them. I know what that feels like, because I was there for a long time. Nobody even took the time to teach me how to use a datapad until I got here. I couldn't read or anything, because nobody cared enough to teach me. I taught myself some of how to use the Force, but even there, I was heading in a bad direction.

You know what happens to kids that no one cares about? They stop caring, too. They do whatever they need to, to stay alive. I did some pretty horrible things. I thought I had to do them, to stay alive. I don't know for sure what would have happened if I hadn't done what I did, but since I became a Padawan, I've wanted to do something to help all the lost children.

There are a few people who are already doing things. My friend Ariella, here on Almas, watches over about seventy kids. Does it surprise you that there's a hovel with seventy children in it, no adults, less than two kilometers from the Jedi Academy? It surprised a lot of people here, I'm sure. Ariella's a little younger than me, but she takes care of the kids really

well. Then there's Gwen and Dani. Gwen's kind of the watcher in Gadrin, on Cularin, and Dani's the watcher in Hedrett. There are probably about four hundred kids on Cularin alone, living in all kinds of abandoned warehouses and stuff. Gwen and I have been working together a lot recently, with Pthillip and Arin and our friend Alurali - - ooh, and she just passed her trials, so congratulations! - - anyway, we're trying to do things to help the kids, so a lot of the Cularin duty has gone to Dani, but she's good that way.

If I had to guess, I'd say there's at least 1,500 to 2,000 kids without homes in Cularin at any given time. As far as I'm concerned, fifteen or twenty kids that no one noticed, that no one cared about, would be fifteen or twenty too many. Something needs to be done.

I haven't set up any kind of charity fund, and I haven't tried to establish any sort of home thing for them. There aren't any places where you can drop off food. I mean, food isn't even what they need the most, they need medical supplies, really basic stuff like antibio's and bandages. There aren't places where you can drop that off, either.

I probably could go out and do everything that needs to be done. If I had the credits, I mean. Which I really don't. This is all of our problem, though, not just mine. You don't have to give anyone any food, or money, or medical supplies - - but I want you to think about it. Actually look at people when you walk down the street. Look at them, and think about where they come from, and where they're going after they see you. Notice the children. Don't just look past them. Notice them, and then do what your heart tells you to do.

[With that, the image flickers and fades.]